

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

26 July 2026

A Great Call

Text: "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy, eat!"

Isaiah 55:1. Full text: Isaiah 55:1-7.

Isaiah 55 is one of the great chapters in the Bible.

In a jubilant and triumphant manner, it presents an unusual call from God.

God, the creator is portrayed as a merchant pleading with mankind; the creature: Come, this word calls attention to the subject as an important one.

It is as though the merchant is saying, "Stop! Listen! Eyes this way! Ears alert! I have something worthy of your attention!"

The people who are invited.

God's call is not based on one's moral goodness but on one's need.

Isaiah identifies those who are issued this call by four types of needs.

Those who are thirsty.

"Thirst" often indicates intense desire.

In the Middle East water is quite scarce.

It is easy for a body to dehydrate in the arid atmosphere and merciless sun.

But physical thirst is not all that is being discussed here.

The text includes other kinds of thirsts: the thirst of the mind for knowledge, the thirst of the heart for affection, and the thirst of the soul for the spiritual things of God.

In *Matthew 5:6* Jesus says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Robert Hastings suggests that the word "filled" is a term used for feeding cattle.

Just as a well-fed cow stands with sides bulging, so the satisfied believer can expect ultimate realization of their dreams.

Those who are destitute.

Those who are unable to purchase salvation are invited to come and spend "money for that which is not bread."

In *Matthew 5:3* Jesus speaks of those who are spiritually poor.

In *Revelation 3:17-18* the call is given for those who are naked and sick to come.

Jesus welcomes them all.

Those who are deceived.

These destitute people are deceived into believing they could find satisfaction in laboring for and purchasing bread that could never satisfy.

There is a void in the heart that things do not and can never fill.

A story vividly illustrates this point.

Jay Gould was the richest man in the world many years ago.

He had all he wanted.

Despite his wealth and power as a railroad tycoon, he spoke of his life like this: "I suppose I am the most miserable man in the world."

Those who are wicked.

"Wicked" refers to those who are guilty of sin against God and following an evil course in life.

The "unrighteous man" is the man of iniquity, of evil, of falsehood.

All goodness is absent from him.

This glorious call is for everybody, regardless of color, class, or condition.

It is for saint and for sinner.

It is for God's people and for pagans.

It is for you and for us.

If we are conscious of our need and of our inability to meet that need, God says, "Come!"

The conditions that are imposed.

God imposes certain conditions on those who respond.

These conditions are designed to help, not hinder.

We are talking about coming in contact with a holy God.

We could not expect to approach and touch him with sin-stained hands any more than we could expect a surgeon to perform an operation with dirty hands or filthy instruments.

So, if we accept this call, we must meet his conditions.

An attentive ear.

"Hearken" means to give respectful attention, and "diligently" means to do so with speed.

We are to put forth an earnest effort to hear what God has to say.

We are to shut out all other voices and listen to God.

An urgent search.

"Seek" means "to tread" and refers to the steps taken to come to God.

"While he may be found" suggests that there will come a time when he cannot be found" therefore, there is urgency to seek him now.

An earnest call.

Throughout the Bible one may find one encouragement after another to "call" on God.

A genuine repentance.

The sinner is commanded to "forsake his way."

This involves a complete abandonment of all evil-including evil thoughts.

The sinner is admonished to return to God, who will pardon and cleanse.

The blessings that are included.

The purpose in the call that God extends is that all might be blessed.

This blessing is twofold:

The fullness of life.

"Water" suggests the refreshment of life; "wine" suggests joy, exhilaration, comfort.

"Milk" speaks of nourishment.

"Bread" stands for the staple of life, and "fatness" represents the best of extravagant food, in contrast to the leanness of what the people were striving after.

They are invited to eat what will nourish the soul and fill them with joy.

All of these words represent the rich life one has with God and the abundance of the blessing bestowed on those who come into his kingdom.

The forgiveness of sin.

When we turn to God in true repentance, God turns to us in pardoning grace.

Forgiveness of sin is our deepest need, and it is God's greatest gift.

When one truly repents, God pardons abundantly.

In his book "Plum Lines and Fruit Baskets", Ralph L. Murry tells of a scrubwoman in London who became sick.

Her friends made it possible for her to go to the hospital.

While she was convalescing there, she became acquainted with other patients.

Across the hall from her was a twelve-year-old boy, redheaded and freckle-faced.

They talked daily.

Then one morning she was awakened early by commotion in the hall, and before long the boy's mother came in to say, "The doctors say Johnny has about ten minutes to live. Won't you say something to him?"

Although this assignment was difficult, the woman, with the courage of a great Christian, walked quietly across the hall and sat down beside the boy.

She took his thin hand and looked at him.

Quietly, she said, "Listen, Johnny. God made you. God loves you. God sent his Son to save you. God wants you to come home to live with him."

The little fellow turned his eyes weakly toward her and said in a whisper, "Say it again."

Quietly she repeated the same words: "God made you. God loves you. God sent his Son to save you. God wants you to come home to live with him."

Johnny looked into the calm face of his friend and said, "Tell God, Thank you".

In *Psalms* 116 David spoke of his love for the Lord and of God's delivering him from sorrow.

In *verse 12* he asks, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"

Then he answers his own question in *verse 13*: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

That's what God wants from us.

The proper response to God's call is to accept it.

Then spend the rest of our lives living for and through HIM.